

His father's chosen companions were those with whom his attendance at the British Museum brought him into contact or his studies into sympathy, men like Francis Douce and Sharon Turner, Crofton Croker and Francis Cohen; and, above all, John Murray, his publisher. Murray, indeed, has a place of some importance in our story. Being on terms of closest intimacy with the D'Israeli family, he had seen the eldest son grow up from childhood, and was among the first to note his unusual capacity; so much so that before the youth had completed his eighteenth year we find the shrewd 'publisher seeking his opinion as to the merits of a tragedy which there was some thought of producing. In recognition of his precocity Benjamin was early admitted to the privilege of accompanying his father to Murray's dinner parties, where he listened with rapt attention to the discourse of Murray's guests, usually literary celebrities, small or great. Of one of these feasts of wit and learning we have a record from Ms own pen which helps us to realise the character of them all.

November 27th, 1822.
Wednesday. — Dined at Murray's.
Present Tom Moore, Stuart
Newton, John Murray, Walter
Hamilton, my father and self.
Moore very entertaining. . . .

Moore. — This is excellent "wine,
Murray.

D'Israeli. — You'll miss the French
wines.¹

M. — Yes, the return to port is
awful.

D. — I am not fond of port, hut
really there is a great deal of
good port in England, and
you'll soon get used to it.

M. — Oh! I have no doubt of it. I
used to be very fond of port
—but French, wines spoil one

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- Yes, his facing has swelled out and he is getting fat; his hair is gray and his countenance has lost that 'spiritual expression' which he so eminently had. His teeth are getting bad, and when I saw him he said that if ever he came to England it would be to consult Wayte about them.

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¹ Moore had recently returned from his long residence abroad.

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